In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Mr. Matjila (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.55 p.m.

Agenda item 5: High-level segment (*continued*)
(E/2018/33, E/2018/50, E/2018/61 and E/2018/66)

Introductory statements

1. **Mr. Harris** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the main theme of the 2018 session, "From global to local: supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities" (E/2018/61); the overview of the *World Economic and Social Survey 2018: Frontier technologies for sustainable development* (E/2018/50) and the report of the Secretary-General on harnessing new technologies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2018/66), said that the report on the main theme of the session discussed global commitments and approaches to building resilience and reducing risk. It identified drivers of risk and proposed actions and tools for building sustainable, resilient societies at the local level. It emphasized the importance of national and local ownership strategies, strengthening local capacities and systems, foresight and risk planning, policy integration and inclusive participation.

2. Turning to the overview of the *World Economic and Social Survey 2018*, he said that the overview reminded readers that, despite their potential for good, new technologies could exacerbate underemployment, unemployment and income inequality, and they raised moral and ethical concerns. The United Nations and the international community needed a better understanding of how technological progress could be steered to support sustainable development in order to develop policies that maximized benefits and mitigated risks and negative externalities. The overview underscored the need to balance efficiency, equity and ethical considerations, the importance of robust international cooperation in managing frontier technologies and the role of the United Nations in steering them to support sustainable development.

3. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on harnessing new technologies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, he said that the report aimed to launch a dialogue among Member States and relevant actors on how to prepare for the huge impact of technologies and mobilize them for the common good. It discussed the role and responsibilities of governments and the steps they could take to harness opportunities and address potential risks by working with a wide range of stakeholders. The United Nations must be able to provide spaces such as the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the Internet Governance Forum where stakeholders could come together to discuss frameworks, exchange good practices and reflect on where protocols, principles or other mechanisms or incentives might be needed.

4. However, to provide a meaningful platform for collaboration, the Organization must strengthen its own capacity to engage with new technologies and new technology actors. For that reason, the Secretary-General had initiated broad consultations on defining a United Nations strategy on new technology. The United Nations needed to improve its understanding of how new technologies affected specific mandates, learn whether and how it could use them to improve mandate delivery and internal management and be able to share lessons learned with Member States and other actors.

5. **Mr. Ocampo** (Chair of the Committee for Development Policy), introducing the report of the Committee for Development Policy on its twentieth session (E/2018/33), said that the Committee had conducted its triennial review of the list of least developed countries. It had addressed the monitoring of countries that were graduating or had graduated from the list and the need for improved assistance for graduating least developed countries, and it had analysed the voluntary national reviews. It had also addressed aspects of the 2030 Agenda pledge to leave no one behind.

6. In its review of the least developed category, the Committee had recommended Bhutan, São Tomé and Príncipe, Solomon Islands and Kiribati for graduation. As graduating countries, they required support for the transition and for further development.

7. Keeping the pledge to leave no one behind was central to the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies. As part of its work, the Committee had analysed progress on that pledge from multiple perspectives. Despite many successful experiences, at the current pace, it would be impossible to attain the Sustainable Development Goals in many critical areas, including education, health, housing and poverty eradication. Extreme inequality persisted in and among countries. Many were being pushed farther behind by technological development and climate change or continued to lack the productive capacity for sustainable development. Many had even undergone re-primarization.

8. Fundamental changes were required. First, it was necessary to address not only the problems of those at the bottom but also the concentration of income, wealth

and political power at the top. Policy should be driven by the needs of the deprived and disadvantaged, which meant removing barriers to political and civic participation and ensuring that government was accountable to all citizens. Second, targeted interventions would often be ineffective unless the principle of leaving no one behind was reflected in strategic frameworks and macroeconomic and production-sector policies. Third, policies, legislation and investments should be based on a careful analysis of benefits and risks, including potential negative effects on other sectors, groups and countries as well as future generations.

9. In its analysis of the 2017 voluntary national reviews, the Committee had found almost universal recognition of the principle of leaving no one behind. However, to be more effective as a mechanism for sharing experiences, the reviews should provide more in-depth information on what strategies had been used to reach the most marginalized and vulnerable and how complex policy trade-offs had been addressed.

10. Developing countries needed the ability to build sound and efficient redistributive tax systems and the policy space to define and implement their own strategies. Unfortunately, they were hampered by insufficient international tax cooperation, unregulated global finance, trade rules that did not facilitate market access for the poorest countries, intellectual property rights regimes that were skewed against the poor and the absence of an orderly, timely and fair procedure for sovereign debt crisis resolution. Given the extremely limited fiscal capacity of the poorest countries, the international community should institute trade regimes based on fair and equitable terms, enable them to harness the benefits of migration, remittance and diaspora engagement and prevent illicit financial flows.

11. With respect to development cooperation, new and traditional providers and recipients should be integrated in a more comprehensive and representative framework. Development cooperation strategies based on country needs should be preferred over isolated interventions, and cooperation policies should contribute to guaranteeing minimum social standards for all people. Increased official development assistance (ODA) was essential.

(a) Ministerial meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (*continued*)

General debate

12. **The President** opened the general debate of the 2018 high-level segment on the theme "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies".

13. **Mr. Remengesau, Jr.** (Palau), President of the Republic, speaking on behalf of the Group of Pacific Small Island Developing States, said that devastating weather events were battering their infrastructure and their settlements, and sea level rise threatened their coastlines, their water supplies and, for some, their very existence. At the same time, greenhouse gas-induced acidification of the Pacific Ocean threatened their livelihoods and way of life. Because of their vulnerability to economic shocks and the effects of climate change, building resilience was part and parcel of their sustainable development strategies and was underscored in their approaches to each of the Sustainable Development Goals under review in the high-level political forum. They had adopted a regional framework for resilient development that was complimented by numerous national development plans emphasizing the reduction of natural disaster risk. In view of growing threats to their already scarce freshwater supplies, they welcomed the recent launch of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028, and called for increased partnerships. As small island developing States (SIDS), they were strongly committed to transitioning to renewable energies, and they welcomed the Secretary-General's acknowledgement of the importance of traditional and local knowledge-holders in the management of local ecosystems.

14. Those States wished to emphasize Goal 17 on revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development. During the regional preparation for the mid-term review of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, the States had repeated their call for genuine and durable partnerships in the context of the 2030 Agenda. They looked forward to the report on the review of United Nations system support for small island developing States and to the full implementation of its recommendations.

15. **Ms. Pucheta de Correa** (Paraguay), Vice-President of the Republic, speaking on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, said that her country, which held the Group presidency for 2018–2019, was committed to the promotion of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked

Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, which was an integral part of the 2030 Agenda. The Group would give priority to preparing for the Programme of Action mid-term review in 2019 and was confident that strategies could be agreed for accelerating its implementation. It remained firmly committed to continuing to strengthen the mechanisms for monitoring progress on the Sustainable Development Goals through participation in the voluntary national reviews.

16. Speaking in her national capacity, she said that the theme of transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies accorded with the objectives of the Vienna Programme of Action, which was the basis of her country's national development plan. Paraguay had the largest per capita reserve of fresh water in the world and ample electrical power, almost all renewably generated. Her Government had made progress in providing clean drinking water and had developed a plan to make Paraguay a regional energy hub. Furthermore, in view of the link between water and power generation, Itaipú Binacional, the Brazilian-Paraguayan operator of the Itaipú hydroelectric power plant, had joined with the United Nations to launch Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions, an initiative aimed at creating an international multi-stakeholder platform for capacity improvement, dialogue and cooperation. A national water and sanitation company had been established to address the problem of access to water in rural areas, and her Government would continue to work to improve access to both water and power, particularly for rural women.

17. Clean, renewable energy led to clean industrialization and the production of goods and services, thereby fostering sustainable economic development. Energy security was essential for economic growth and should be a priority for all countries.

18. **Ms. Nasr** (Egypt), Minister of Investment and International Cooperation, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that Member States were still not fully on track to implement the 2030 Agenda. With regard to Goals 1 and 2, poverty eradication and food security, more than 780 million people remained below the international poverty line, and the number of undernourished people had actually risen. The scale and ambition of the 2030 Agenda required strengthening the developing countries' means of implementation and creating an enabling global environment for development through sustainable financing options, global partnerships and long-term investments. The Group reaffirmed the need to address the diverse needs and challenges faced by African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, conflict and post-conflict countries, countries and peoples living under foreign occupation and middle-income countries.

19. Progress had also been insufficient on the Goals under review. Given the critical nature of access to managed drinking water and basic sanitation services, the Group applauded the holding of the eighth World Water Forum in March and the High-level International Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development" in June. It stressed the clear and persistent need to ensure universal access to affordable, reliable energy, to address the economic, environmental and social challenges of cities and human settlements, to ensure more sustainable consumption and production patterns, to protect and restore terrestrial ecosystems and promote their sustainable use, to manage forests sustainably, to combat desertification, and to halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. All stakeholders must shoulder their responsibility to ensure timely and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

20. **Mr. Vella** (Observer for the European Union), Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, said that the Secretary-General's report on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2018/64) was a clear call to action. The European Union would rise to the challenges through better cooperation and remained committed to leading on sustainable development. Later in 2018, the European Commission would publish a reflection paper on the European Union's sustainable future, and 24 of its member States would be presenting voluntary national reviews during the forum.

21. Given the cross-cutting nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, investment in achieving the Goals under review would benefit the 2030 Agenda as a whole. The European Union reaffirmed its commitments regarding the right to safe drinking water and sanitation and recognized the importance of access to clean, sustainable, reliable, modern and affordable energy for all, especially the most vulnerable and the poorest. It underscored the value of the New Urban Agenda and had allocated billions of euros for sustainable urban development across Europe.

22. In the crucial area of sustainable consumption and production, the European Union was committed to a low-carbon, resource efficient economy and supported the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. Its Circular Economy Action Plan addressed the lifecycle of materials and products and had given rise to a strategy on plastics. With the world's largest network of

protected areas, the European Union was a leader in integrating biodiversity and ecosystem services into all relevant sectors. It welcomed the conclusions and recommendations of the financing for development forum and remained committed to developing innovative ways to mobilize resources.

23. With regard to external action, the European Union External Investment Plan was boosting private investment in Africa and its European neighbourhood. As the largest provider of official development assistance, it called on others to meet their ODA commitments.

24. Achieving a robust monitoring and review process for the Goals would require further improvement of data and statistics and the involvement of all stakeholders. The European Union looked forward to the review of the high-level political forum process at the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, which was certain to make the forum more effective, and reiterated its full support for the Secretary-General's ambitious reform agenda.

25. **Mr. Kamal** (Bangladesh), Minister for Planning, speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that the percentage of the population in the least developed countries with access to water and electricity was roughly half the global figure, and the percentage of the urban population living in slums was almost triple. In view of the level of investment required to meet the Sustainable Development Goals in those countries, the Group was deeply concerned to see hardly any progress on Goal 17 and no significant progress on establishing the investment promotion regime for foreign direct investment.

26. The least developed countries faced serious threats. In the past two years, their debt burden had doubled. Official development assistance was declining, and inward-looking, anti-globalization policies were on the rise. According to some estimates, almost 250 million people in least developed countries had been affected by shocks and crises between 2010 and 2017.

27. Action was required at all levels to mobilize resources and provide technical assistance for building capacity and resilience in the least developed countries, which should be accompanied by their own sustained efforts to mobilize resources domestically, build strong social safety nets and fiscal buffers and institute market-based insurance programmes. The Group reiterated its appeal to all stakeholders to provide technical and financial support to the newly established Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries. The vulnerabilities of countries that had graduated from the least developed category should be brought into the mainstream development discourse.

28. **Ms. Robinson-Regis** (Trinidad and Tobago), Minister of Planning and Development, speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the third high-level political forum would afford Member States an opportunity to take stock of their progress on the Goals under review and recalibrate their approach as necessary. CARICOM looked forward to the presentation of voluntary national reviews, in which two of its members would be participating.

29. Eradicating poverty, changing sustainable patterns of consumption and production and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development were essential requirements for sustainable development. Sustainable development also required promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion, and promoting the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems.

30. In view of the above, sustainable finance was an absolute necessity. That would require a collective focus on how financial markets could be aligned with sustainable development and on concrete ways for financing it. The CARICOM countries' ability to follow through on the 2030 Agenda was compromised by their high levels of debt. Furthermore, their small economies were vulnerable to economic shocks, natural disasters and the effects of climate change, and the termination of correspondent banking relations had the potential to threaten their economic stability and their capacity to remain integrated in global financial, trade and economic systems.

31. CARICOM reiterated its call for a re-examination of the allocation criteria for international development cooperation, which should be based on methodologies that accounted for the multidimensional nature of development; accordingly, it welcomed the forthcoming high-level meeting on middle-income countries. For its members, sustainable development could not be divorced from the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, and the attention to the development needs of small island developing States was thus welcome.

32. **Mr. Muia** (Kenya), Principal Secretary of National Treasury and Planning, speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that many African countries had presented their voluntary national reviews in the previous two years, and more would be participating in 2018. The African countries welcomed the Goals under review, each of which touched on a fundamental human

right threatened by increasing climate events. Africa continued to lose arable land to desertification, which contributed to growing urbanization and massive migration flows. The African countries supported the International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028. Indeed, all six Sustainable Development Goals under review tackled important aspects of their efforts towards socioeconomic transformation. Sustainable and resilient transformation was in line not only with those Goals but also with Agenda 2063 of the African Union, and it required integrated strategies and approaches.

33. Africa was unlikely to achieve affordable and clean energy for all by 2030. Although some countries had made significant headway on electrification, there had been less progress with respect to clean cooking and the use of modern renewable energies. It was crucial to address data gaps and reliability, especially with regard to biomass, in order to better inform monitoring and investment planning.

34. African cities were growing fast, but that did not make them productive. Productive cities required a high density of economic activities arranged in a well laid-out and properly managed spatial economy. Sustainable urban development would require urgent short-term and thoughtful long-term actions coordinated under broader national development frameworks. North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation should be further enhanced to facilitate technology transfer and the sharing of experiences.

35. Innovative solutions and enabling policies were needed to reverse unsustainable consumption patterns and practices. Science and technological innovation should drive inclusive and sustainable development, with special emphasis on women and girls, young people and vulnerable groups. Investment in research and development should be increased substantially and attention should be given to the development of climate information and services, resilient infrastructure and green industrialization capacity. Technology should be harnessed to improve data collection and analysis.

36. With respect to means of implementation, developed countries must honour their historic obligations and responsibilities as part of their commitment to revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development. That meant implementing the concrete policies and actions outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which was an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

37. The international community must effectively address illicit financial flows and their negative consequences. Multinational corporations and similar entities based in developed countries should pay taxes in the African countries where their revenues were generated.

38. **Mr. Escalante Hasbún** (El Salvador), Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that CELAC welcomed the second meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development and its intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations. It stressed the importance of the regional level in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including with respect to means of implementation and the financing for development process, and it was grateful for the role of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. It noted the contributions of the eighth World Water Forum and the High Level Panel on Water. The region's commitment to the implementation of the Agenda was illustrated by the number of Latin American and Caribbean States participating in the voluntary national review process, some of them for the second time. CELAC applauded the progress made by the States that had already incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals into their national and local plans.

39. All countries — including least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, countries that had recently graduated from the least developed category and middle-income countries — faced specific challenges for sustainable development. The allocation criteria for international development cooperation, including ODA, should be based on methodologies that accounted for the multidimensional nature of development, with a view to building a global architecture of cooperation in which all developing countries received support in accordance with their challenges, vulnerabilities and structural gaps. CELAC welcomed the global discussions of the impact of technological change during the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals and the twenty-first session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development.

40. The high-level political forum on sustainable development was meeting for the first time since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 72/279 on repositioning of the United Nations development system to provide better support for the 2030 Agenda.

41. The CELAC countries remained committed to promoting gender equity and equality and the advancement of women as cross-cutting components of

their policies, strategies and actions. They reaffirmed the importance of the sovereign right of States to dispose of their resources and the need to respect each country's policy space for sustainable development. National development efforts should be supported by an enabling international environment, including coherent and mutually supporting world trade, monetary and financial systems, and strengthened and enhanced global economic governance. The CELAC countries were committed to pursuing policy coherence and an enabling environment for development.

42. **Mr. Mohamed** (Maldives), Permanent Representative of Maldives to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that resilience in the face of global crises and natural disasters was critical for small island developing States. They saw the high-level political forum as a critical space for highlighting their specific challenges, and they looked forward to working towards full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

43. Without significant acceleration of global efforts, the ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda would not be achieved, particularly in countries such as theirs. Small island developing States faced unique challenges, ranging from remoteness, limited resource bases and structural limitations to vulnerability to climate events, which were increasing in frequency and intensity. To build resilience and implement both the 2030 Agenda and the SAMOA Pathway, they needed improved access to capacity-building, financing and support, including support for national statistical offices. They were actively seeking new partnerships that would enable risk-informed, sustainable investment in infrastructure and land use.

44. The small island States placed great value on the ministerial declaration of the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development (E/HLPF/2018/L.3). As an intergovernmentally negotiated document, it did not fully reflect all of their desires, but they hoped that the engagement and momentum built would lead to progress. They looked forward to the 2019 high-level review of the SAMOA pathway, which would help them to accelerate and improve their efforts.

45. **Mr. Moir Sandoval** (Guatemala), Secretary of Planning and Programming, speaking on behalf of the Like-minded Group of Supporters of Middle-Income Countries, said that the middle-income countries faced serious obstacles to confronting poverty, inequality, external debt and environmental vulnerabilities. Improvements in their macroeconomic indicators did not necessarily indicate progress in eradicating poverty, since even high growth middle-income countries had high or rising levels of inequality. Middle-income countries accounted for 70 per cent of the global population, one third of global gross domestic product and almost three quarters of the world's poor. Many were still struggling to strengthen their institutional capacities for water resource management and the implementation of energy technologies, as well as respond to rapid urbanization, improve housing and infrastructure resilience, increase awareness of sustainable consumption and production, counter the effects of pollution and loss of biodiversity and make technological innovation work for sustainable development.

46. Development aid fell as average income rose, leaving middle-income countries without sufficient affordable, long-term financing to invest in the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations system should continue providing assistance to countries within existing mandates and resources until they achieved sustainable development. It was crucial for the United Nations development system to create a systemic focus on middle-income countries, since they represented more than two thirds of the country programmes and almost 60 per cent of country-level expenditures. The Group had high expectations for the first high-level meeting of the General Assembly on middle-income countries, which it hoped would reinforce the importance of developing a comprehensive long-term strategy within the United Nations system.

47. The Group welcomed the initiatives to promote debt exchanges as a means of restructuring external debt. In view of the strategic development role that middle-income countries could play by sharing experiences and good practices, it urged the United Nations to intensify its efforts to encourage middle-income countries to engage in South-South and triangular cooperation.

48. As suggested in the Secretary-General's report on development cooperation with middle-income countries (A/72/329), the experience of the Committee for Development Policy in defining the criteria for the categorization and graduation of the least developed countries could be used as a good reference for classifying middle-income countries according to a more appropriate set of multidimensional measures of economic, social and environmental progress, such as indices for poverty, human development and economic and environmental vulnerability. Unless the international community systematically rejected the current approach of measuring development by economic growth without considering the special conditions and challenges of middle-income countries,

they would be unable to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

49. **Mr. Ruiz Cabañas** (Mexico), Vice-Minister of Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights), speaking on behalf of the LGBTI Core Group, said that too many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people lived in poverty. LGBTI people often experienced multiple and intersecting forms of violence and discrimination and faced barriers to health care and other basic social services, housing, education, labour market participation and even access to official identity documents. To leave no one behind, governments should ensure full respect for the rights of LGBTI people, including by protecting them from discrimination and violence, and should team with the private sector to offer them support and opportunities. The Group hoped that the discussion in the high-level political forum would highlight the importance of implementing national policies based on the full inclusion of LGBTI persons across the globe.

50. **Mr. Djani** (Indonesia), Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia (MIKTA), said that the MIKTA countries welcomed the growing prominence of the high-level political forum, during which 47 countries, including Australia and Mexico, would be presenting their voluntary national reviews. It was essential to revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development and to provide comparably ambitious means of implementation. That would require strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships with the private sector, civil society and academia, improving access to financial resources, promoting public and private investments, and building capacities, including in data-related fields. It would also require full, effective and timely implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

51. To create sustainable and resilient societies, concrete actions were needed to promote the sustainable use of water, expand access to drinking water and sanitation systems, foster clean, renewable energy, ensure more sustainable use and management of forests and land, mainstream biodiversity in the productive sectors, promote inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable human settlement and encourage sustainable consumption and production. They welcomed collaboration and sharing in all of those areas, including with respect to climate change adaptation and oceans management. They also invited all stakeholders to provide financial and technical assistance to the newly inaugurated Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries.

52. In view of the inclusive nature of the Sustainable Development Goals and the crucial contributions of vulnerable groups, the MIKTA countries had promoted the inclusion of disabled people and high quality disability statistics at the most recent session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and they had showcased women's leadership at the 2018 Women Innovators from MIKTA exhibition. They had also organized the MIKTA Education in Emergencies Challenge to elicit ideas for new ways to deliver education in emergency situations, particularly for girls.

53. In recognition of the positive potential of technological change, the MIKTA countries had launched the MIKTA Innovation Group, which brought together inventive thinkers to promote the commercialization of new technologies and creative ideas. They shared the Secretary-General's view that the introduction of new technologies should leave no one behind and welcomed the repositioning of the United Nations development system.

54. **Mr. Braun** (Luxembourg), Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends on Children and the Sustainable Development Goals, said that the 2030 Agenda should be an agenda of the people, by the people and for the people. Countries around the world should empower and enlist the support of every citizen, beginning with the youngest. Investing in children was essential for the creation of sustainable, resilient societies. It meant not only enabling them to reach their full potential, as was their right; but also promoting inclusive growth, a cleaner, more sustainable environment, safe and stable communities and countries, strong public institutions and a vibrant public sector.

55. Of the members of the Group, 17 were presenting voluntary national reviews in 2018, and 6 had already volunteered for 2019. All were committed to improving the lives of children and young people. Other Member States should follow their lead by creating opportunities for them to learn about and take action on the Goals and by soliciting and using their views in decision-making processes.

56. To ensure that children were not left behind, it was vital to invest in tools and systems to improve the quality of data on children. It was also necessary to improve the tracking of social spending on interventions and programmes that were critical for improving their lives.

57. Looking ahead to 2019, the Group saw the two meetings of the high-level political forum and the

thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as strategic opportunities for Member States to recommit to children's rights and to local, national and global action for and with children.

58. **Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru), Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends for Disaster Risk Reduction, said that increasingly severe disasters disproportionately affected the poorest and most vulnerable, making disaster risk reduction a priority for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction provided a global policy framework for integrating disaster risk reduction, sustainable development and climate change, and the online Monitor tool had been created to monitor its implementation. States must translate the Sendai Framework into integrated national and subnational programmes by developing local disaster risk reduction strategies, translating them into local legislation and including disaster risk reduction expertise in national sustainable development mechanisms. The Group urged all countries to prioritize having disaster reduction strategies in place by 2020 in accordance with the Sendai Framework and to integrate them into their sustainable development and climate adaption strategies.

59. To pay for disaster risk reduction, national sustainable development frameworks and infrastructure plans should be aligned with disaster risk reduction strategies, and incentives and regulations should be established to promote and regulate risk-informed private- and public-sector investments. At the regional and international levels, dedicated financing mechanisms should be created, and disaster risk reduction should be mainstreamed in development assistance and financing. The Group urged the global community to provide adequate support for small, vulnerable countries to be able to meet their Sendai commitments.

60. Welcoming the recent adoption of the Strategic Framework on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters, he said that coordinated efforts and quality geospatial information and services were critical to building safer, resilient communities. In view of the importance of a collaborative and coordinated approach, the Group encouraged multilateral, regional and bilateral cooperation.

61. Development that was not risk-informed was not sustainable. The Group encouraged all countries to participate in the 2019 session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which offered an opportunity to discuss disaster risk reduction issues and would provide insight for the high-level political forum.

62. **Ms. Mesi** (Albania), Deputy Prime Minister, said that the Albanian Parliament had adopted a resolution committing her country to the 2030 Agenda, and an interministerial committee had been set up to oversee its implementation. Some 25 universities had agreed to play an active role, and the National Council for Civil Society had issued a public statement supporting it.

63. Albania's voluntary national review had been prepared in consultation with various stakeholders and reported progress in consolidating public institutions, professionalizing and depoliticizing the civil service, fighting corruption and organized crime, reforming property rights and the justice system and improving human rights standards. In recognition of that progress, the European Commission had recommended starting accession negotiations with Albania in 2019. Albania would continue to strive to embody the European values of unity, justice and diversity.

64. Women accounted for almost a third of the Albanian Parliament and for half of the Cabinet. Albania encouraged innovation and competitiveness. Its successful urban revitalization programme had promoted regional economic growth, and it would continue to focus on improving water and land management.

65. **Ms. Gavrilescu** (Romania), Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Environment, said that Romania aimed to create an enabling environment for sustainable development by addressing inequalities of all kinds and creating opportunities through medium- and long-term strategies, which were highlighted in its national voluntary review. It advocated shared responsibility, full solidarity and collective action for implementing the 2030 Agenda.

66. As a member of the European Union, Romania was committed to moving towards a circular economy, particularly in the area of plastics, as part of an integrated approach to sustainable development. During the preparation process for the first semester of 2019, when Romania would assume the European Union presidency, it had advanced sustainable development as a top European priority. In view of the utmost importance of the environmental dimension of sustainable development, the resolutions, decisions and outcome documents of the United Nations Environment Assembly were crucial for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

67. **Mr. Ulziisaikhan** (Mongolia), Deputy Prime Minister, said that Mongolia had been an early adopter

of the Sustainable Development Goals. A parliamentary subcommittee and a cabinet-level committee set sustainable development policy and provided guidance for the relevant ministries, agencies and local governments, and in 2018 it had adopted a "three pillar" development strategy for economic, governance and policy reforms. The 2030 Agenda was being implemented in tandem with other internationally agreed development agendas, including the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction.

68. Following the entry into force of the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries in 2017, Mongolia had organized the first meeting of the Board of Governors and the inaugural meeting of the think tank in 2018. He drew attention to the Ulaanbaatar Declaration and Action Plan 2018–2020 of the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, which had been adopted at the recent Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. Mongolia had adopted a national strategy for the development of statistics that would strengthen its capacity to measure national Goal indicators, and it would be delivering its first voluntary national review in 2019.

69. **Mr. Briones** (Ecuador) National Secretary of Planning and Development, said that his Government's national development plan aimed to eradicate corruption, child malnutrition, extreme poverty, gender-based violence, child abuse and all forms of discrimination. It had signed cooperation agreements with various countries and was seeking to develop long-term relationships with academia, civil society and the private sector.

70. Noting Ecuador's intensive efforts to provide security along the Colombian border, he said that international cooperation had proved invaluable and urged other actors to provide assistance. Despite the complex economic situation, Ecuador had allocated substantial resources to promoting development in the Amazon basin, where international cooperation would also be critical. His Government asked the international financial institutions for their understanding while it worked to reverse complex economic problems that it had not created.

71. **Mr. Duclos** (Canada), Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, noting that Canada would be presenting its first voluntary national review that week, said that his Government was implementing policies and programmes to improve the lives of people who had long been underrepresented, including indigenous people, women, immigrants and refugees, disabled people and LGBTI people.

72. Canada had adopted a feminist international assistance policy based on its belief in the far-reaching benefits of empowering women and girls. It was making significant investments in tackling climate change, improving water sustainability and protecting marine and coastal areas and would be co-hosting a conference on the blue economy in November in Nairobi. It acknowledged that small island developing States, least developed countries and other countries in special situations often faced unique challenges for sustainable development.

73. Canada was deeply committed to a rules-based international order. The 2030 Agenda was an example of how States could work together to achieve common goals. His Government would continue to work with other Member States, other levels of government in Canada, indigenous peoples, civil society, the private sector, international organizations and others to bring about a prosperous and sustainable future for all.

74. **Ms. Leuthard** (Switzerland), Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications, said that, as a strong advocate of a robust monitoring and review mechanism, Switzerland was pleased to be presenting its voluntary national review. In the two and a half years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, progress had been glacial or even negative. For example, the parties to the Paris Agreement were struggling to meet the end-2018 deadline for adopting rules for the formulation of nationally determined contributions, including clear guidance on the cooperative market-based approaches and on reporting and verification, and they had yet to submit national plans for limiting temperature rise. Urgent action was needed at the next Conference of the Parties.

75. Action must also be taken to address the negative impacts of forced migration and turn migration to the advantage of sustainable development. Comprehensive, coherent, long-term strategies were needed throughout the migratory cycle. Switzerland therefore welcomed the recent successful conclusion of the negotiations on the global covenant for safe, orderly and regular migration.

76. Partnerships with the private sector and academia were vital for the Agenda. In addition to mobilizing additional financial resources, public-private partnerships should encourage the private sector to adopt more sustainable business models. Sustainability should not mean sacrificing profitability. The steady

growth in sustainable financing showed that investing in development was profitable. As an international city, Geneva could contribute much to bringing about the necessary change in mind-sets.

77. Switzerland fully supported the Secretary-General's agenda to reform the United Nations development system. Continuing to go it alone amidst the challenges and interconnectivity of the modern world was not an option.

78. **Ms. Frick** (Liechtenstein), Minister of Foreign Affairs, Justice and Culture, said that Liechtenstein had set objectives for Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5, 7 and 9 in the 2017–2021 government programme and had defined specific actions for attaining them. Moreover, it was working to increase official development assistance to 0.5 per cent of gross national income in the near future.

79. If managed well, migration was an engine for growth, sustainable development, cultural enrichment and innovation. The global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration was a first step in that direction. Liechtenstein promoted the inclusion of migrants and refugees through innovative basic language instruction. The non-profit language initiative was her country's contribution to the road map of the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, a group of United Nations Member States, international organizations and other partners working to promote the attainment of Goal 16.

80. Liechtenstein strongly supported target 8.7 on the eradication of forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking. Slavery was big business, and the financial sector was well positioned to root out slavery-related activities hidden in corporate supply chains. Liechtenstein was analysing how it could use its expertise as a financial centre to assist global efforts to end slavery and human trafficking. It fully supported the Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.